

Preface



Welcome to the FLAIRS-98 conference. This is the eleventh annual conference of the Florida AI Research Society. FLAIRS was founded in 1987 to promote and advance Artificial Intelligence research within the state of Florida, fostering interaction between researchers at colleges, universities, and industry.

From its inception, one major goal of the society has been to promote the advancement of AI through a yearly conference. During the first two years of the conference, participation was limited to Florida residents. Since 1990, the conference has been open to all and we have seen a dramatic increase in participation from around the world, due in part to the warm climate offered by this conference location, but also due to the increase in research quality. This year we welcome participants from nineteen countries around the world including Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Denmark, France, Germany, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tunisia, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

This year's conference covers a wide range of algorithms, methodologies, and applications. The proceedings features topics in uncertainty reasoning, natural language processing, machine learning, expert systems, knowledge representation, data mining, theorem proving, and AI education with a variety of applications in areas such as accident prevention education, military planning, simulated race cars, and computer bridge. Six special tracks allow participants to engage in discussions with peers in their area of specialty. The conference also hosts insightful invited talks from Jim Bezdek, Oren Etzioni, Ken Ford, Pat Hayes, Sridhar Mahadevan, and Ray Mooney.

Many people contributed greatly to the success of this conference with their time and efforts. We would particularly like to thank the program committee, FLAIRS officers, invited speakers, and all of the authors for their crucial roles in creating a forum for AI researchers to share their excitement of the field, demonstrate their results, and encourage continued excellence. Again we welcome you to FLAIRS'98 and trust you will find the conference content stimulating and the location ideal for relaxed discussions of research.

Diane J. Cook, Program Chair